



State of West Virginia
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 7-13, 2007 is National Fire Prevention Week



Last year, West Virginia's fire departments responded to 8,202 fires. Sixty-two of those fires resulted in 80 fire deaths, and the majority of fatal fires occurred in residential structures. Every year, common causes of fire include misuse of electrical and heating equipment, careless smoking, cooking, unattended or uncontrolled outdoor burning, arson, and others.

When fire happens, your first action must be to escape. Fire travels fast, and you have only minutes to get out alive. Not planning ahead can cost lives. That's why this year's theme is "*It's Fire Prevention Week: Practice Your Escape Plan*".

According to a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) poll, most Americans have a fire escape plan, *but most haven't practiced it.* To escape safely, you've got to have—and practice—a home escape plan.

Press Release: National Fire Prevention Week
Page 2

The State Fire Marshal's Office offers the following tips to keep in mind when you and your family are making a home escape plan:

- Use a simple grid pattern to draw a basic floor plan of your home. Show 2 ways out of each room, if possible. (NFPA's website--listed below--has a downloadable grid sheet for family escape planning.)
- Pick and show a meeting place outside the house where everyone will meet after escaping from a house fire. This can be a mailbox, telephone pole, tree, etc.
- Make sure someone can assist those family members who might need extra help, such as older adults, people with disabilities, and children.
- Be sure everyone understands that once they are out of a burning house, they should never go back in. Belongings can be replaced--lives can't.
- For early warning of a fire, make sure you have working smoke alarms on each level of your home, in corridors outside sleeping areas, and inside each bedroom.
- Test your smoke alarms monthly, and keep them dusted and clean.
- Replace batteries at least once a year.
- ***REMINDER: November 4th (when we change our clocks back to Standard Time) has been designated as the day to "Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries" by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). This safety campaign, which is in its 20th year, raises awareness of the need to keep working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in the home, maintaining and testing them regularly, and changing the battery on an easy-to-remember date, such as when changing clocks back to and from Daylight Savings Time....***
- ***For more information on fire safety and National Fire Prevention Week, go to the NFPA Website: www.nfpa.org or www.firepreventionweek.org.***

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This release submitted by:

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10/2/07